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# Public Health Reports

Treasury Department, United States Marine-Hospital Service. Published in accordance with act of Congress approved February 15, 1893.

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## UNITED STATES.

*Quarantine officer at Havana, Cuba.*

In accordance with Executive order of January 17, 1899, Sanitary Inspector W. F. Brunner, United States Marine-Hospital Service, was detailed by the Secretary of the Treasury, February 1, 1899, as quarantine officer of the port of Havana.

[Reports to the Supervising Surgeon-General, United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

### *Smallpox in the United States.*

#### COLORADO.

DENVER, COLO., *February 4, 1899.*

SIR: The following statement is issued in order that the medical profession may be accurately informed as to the present status of the smallpox outbreaks in Denver.

Denver has been free from smallpox since 1890, with the exception of imported cases at long intervals, as follows: 1891, 1 case from Trinidad; 1892, 1 case from New Mexico; 1893, 4 cases from Seattle; 1895, 1 case en route from Mexico.

#### PRESENT PREVALENCE OF THE DISEASE IN DENVER.

On November 15, 1898, a sheep herder from New Mexico, suffering from the disease, passed through the city, going to Fort Collins, where it is reported he died. Ten days after he passed through Denver, 2 railway employees with whom he had come in contact developed smallpox; a week later the child of one of these men and a sister of the other were taken down. All were removed to hospital; all recovered

and were discharged by January 15, 1899. No further manifestations have been discovered due to this infection and we regard it as ended.

A negro from Pueblo, of whom the officers had a description but whom they were unable to discover, came to Denver about Christmas time. Persons who had come in contact with him began to be sick the first week in January. A succession of 12 cases among the negroes have occurred as a result of this infection, all being removed to the hospital and all are there under treatment at this date. The cases range from the lightest varioloid to the severest confluent and hemorrhagic types. This outbreak is still under way and will probably contribute new cases from time to time.

On December 24, a business man of this city returned from a trip through southern Texas, where he had been exposed to smallpox. On January 7, he was reported to the office by his physician as having smallpox. From this case two other cases arose, one being the child and the other the partner of the gentleman originally affected.

About January 18, a prisoner in the county jail began to complain of illness; he had been an inmate of the jail for two months and was not known to have been in any way exposed to smallpox; after several days, however, a typical eruption developed and he was removed to the hospital. On January 27, a man just discharged from the jail was found to have the disease; he had been a prisoner for three months and in the same corridor with the preceding case.

The total number of cases occurring from these four sources of infection has been 21; at this time every known case of the disease is isolated at the Sand Creek Quarantine Hospital. One death has thus far occurred, and it is probable that several of the colored persons affected will die, as the disease is confluent with some of them.

#### PRECAUTIONS TAKEN.

In each instance of infection all persons whose exposure has been great have been removed to hospital for supervision or observation or else the occupants of the infected premises have been kept under surveillance for two full weeks. Vaccination has been done for all persons in infected districts. General vaccination has been urged upon the whole city and a very large number of persons have been vaccinated. In the health office alone over 8,000 vaccinations have been done.

The wholesale drug firms report the sale of over 15,000 tubes of lymph to physicians in the city. It is assumed that nearly 24,000 persons have been vaccinated since January 1.

Infected goods in the houses where the cases occurred have been burned in every instance. The houses have always been disinfected twice and in some instances three times, using either sulphur or formaldehyd, as the circumstances seemed to justify.

The advisory board of health met on the evening of February 1, and, after a careful consideration of all the circumstances connected with the various phases of the outbreaks, decided that it was necessary to call the attention of every physician in the whole city to a plain statement of all the facts.

It was further decided that since the diagnosis of smallpox in its earlier stages presents difficulties that for a time may mislead even the most experienced and conscientious practitioner, all physicians be urged to comply with the strict letter of the law in reporting to the health office for examination and consultation all cases where the slightest possibility of a contagious eruptive disease may exist. The public

welfare, as well as the personal reputation of each physician, is at stake, and the responsibility of decision should be early placed upon the health officer, whose duty under the circumstances is clearly defined by law.

The health commissioner trusts that the measures already taken will, with the cooperation of the members of the medical profession, be effectual in stopping the spread of this disease, although the city is in constant danger of fresh importations of infection so long as other communities in the State continue to suffer from it.

Table revised to February 8, 1899. November 25 to February 8, 23 cases, 1 death.

Very respectfully,

WM. P. MUNN,  
*Health Commissioner.*

#### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 7, 1899.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that 4 new cases of smallpox were discovered in this District on the 5th instant, and that 2 more were discovered to-day. The total number of cases up to and including the present time is 10, but they have all occurred in but 5 houses. With a single exception they are now in the smallpox hospital. The prevailing type of disease is exceedingly mild, rendering diagnosis difficult.

Respectfully, yours,

WM. C. WOODWARD, M. D.,  
*Health Officer.*

#### GEORGIA.

##### *Circular for obtaining information concerning smallpox.*

STATE OF GEORGIA, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,

*Atlanta, Ga., February 10, 1899.*

SIR: The inclosed circular has been issued by the Governor of Georgia for the purpose of obtaining accurate information relative to smallpox in this State.

Respectfully, yours,

C. P. WERTENBAKER,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

[Inclosure.]

STATE OF GEORGIA, EXECUTIVE OFFICE,

*Atlanta, Ga., February 9, 1899.*

*To the ordinaries, county commissioners, and local health authorities:*

In view of the prevalence of smallpox in a number of counties in the State, it is desired, in order to suppress the disease and prevent its spread, to have accurate information as to the condition in each county and city in the State. You are requested to furnish the following information at the earliest possible moment, and thereafter make a weekly report as to the condition in your county or city.

- (1) Does smallpox exist in your county or city?
- (2) If so, how long has it existed?
- (3) How many cases have there been, and how many now?
- (4) Give the localities, with numbers of cases in each?
- (5) Is the disease chiefly among the whites or blacks?
- (6) What is being done to suppress it? State in detail the methods that are being used.
- (7) Is the disease spreading?
- (8) Does chicken pox or any other contagious or infectious disease exist? If so, give localities, number of cases, and other details.